# How to use poems to introduce and practise everyday vocabulary and phrases

**CEFR level:** Any level (adapt choice of poem accordingly)

**Exam task focus:** All skills, but particularly vocabulary, listening and speaking.

**Aims:**
- To introduce vocabulary and language through poems.
- To consider how to exploit poems to develop learner's lexical range

**Procedure:**
1. Choose a poem that is suitable for your learners. There are lots of poems available online and always remember to reference and source materials used.
2. Think about what vocabulary (or phrases, language you want to focus learners on) and create a pre-task. This could be matching phrases with definitions, matching pictures with words/phrases or even getting learners to predict what the poem will be about based on the vocabulary and phrases.
3. Learners have a task (or tasks) to complete while listening i.e., they do the task at the same time as they are listening to the poem.
4. Learners complete a post-listening task. This could be learners discussing their opinions about the poem, what they think happened next, what they would do in that situation etc. The post- task could also focus on more phrases or language from the text, with the learners personalising the content.

| Stage | Activities |
|---|---|
| Pre-listening | |
| While listening | |
| Post listening | |

**Here are some effective strategies to consider for all conversation-focused tasks in the classroom:**
- Always think about the interaction patterns and keep tasks learner-centred i.e., lots of pair and small group collaboration
- Don't ask discussion questions around the class: this puts learners in the spotlight and causes potential embarrassment in front of friends. See previous point.
- Give learners a list of statements or opinions: help them to choose their own ideas.
- Use quite short discussion activities (15 minutes). Ask your learners what they are interested in.

- Delayed feedback after speaking should be general: try to avoid drawing attention to individual learners' errors or they will be reluctant to speak next time. Feedback should focus on positive areas and areas for development. Acknowledge their successes and support their development!